

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 ACDA-05 SY-05 OPR-02 A-01 IO-10 /088 W

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R 260815Z JUL 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3470

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0640

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: LOT OF ERITREANS IN ASMARA WORSENS

REF: A. ASMARA 636 B. ASMARA 628

1. AFTER THURSDAY'S RESUMPTION OF MORE OR LESS NORMAL
COMMERCIAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITY (REPORTED REF A), EPMG
SECURITY FORCES AGAIN INITIATED REPRESSIVE VIOLENCE WHICH
HAS ELEVATED LEVEL OF TENSION, FEAR AND HOSTILITY TO NEW HIGH.
BETWEEN 1700 AND 1800 HRS THURSDAY EVENING, EPMG SECURITY FORCES
IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES AND DRIVING UNMARKED CARS REPORTEDLY PICKED
UP AT RANDOM BETWEEN 20 AND 30 YOUNG MEN IN VARIOUS SECTIONS OF
ASMARA, DETAINED THEM UNTIL 7:30 CURFEW, THEN SHOT THEM TO
DEATH AS THEY WERE RELEASED. IN THIS MANNER THEY CLAIMED THAT
VICTIMS WERE SHOT FOR VIOLATING CURFEW. THESE KILLINGS ARE
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EXTENSION OF EPMG EXECUTIONS LAUNCHED LAST WEEKEND (REPORTED

PARA 3, REF B).

2. WHILE MILITARY ACTION IN AREA SURROUNDING ASMARA APPARENTLY HAS SUBSIDED, THIS RENEWED POLITICO-MILITARY VIOLENCE HAS DRAMATICALLY HEIGHTENED ANGER AND RESENTMENT OF ASMARA RESIDENTS TOWARD ALL EPMG FORCES. YOUNG MEN ARE REPORTEDLY SLIPPING QUIETLY OUT OF ASMARA TO AVOID INDISCRIMINATE SLAUGHTER AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY MAKE READY RECRUITS FOR ELF/PLF. THERE IS ALSO WIDESPREAD TALK OF ELF/PLF REPRISAL ATTACK ON EPMG TARGET TO DEMONSTRATE INSURGENTS' CONTINUED STRENGTH AND SOLIDARITY WITH SUFFERING OF "BROTHERS" IN ASMARA. SUCH TALK IS UNDOUBTEDLY INSPIRED BY PROFOUND ANGER AND DEGREE OF WISHFUL THINKING. NONETHELESS, ELF/PLF MAY FEEL COMPELLED TO MAKE VIOLENT GESTURE AGAINST EPMG IN ORDER EXPLOIT INTENSE RESENTMENT AGAINST ALL ETHIOPIANS WHICH CURRENTLY PREVAIL IN ASMARA.

3. COMMENT: ON SURFACE, RECENT EPMG REPRESSIVE MEASURES WOULD SEEM THOROUGHLY SELF-DEFEATING. CONGEN IS, HOWEVER, BEGINNING TO DISCERN SPECIFIC INTENT IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE RANDOM VIOLENCE WHICH COULD BE, IN FACT, WELL-ORCHESTRATED EFFORT AT PRE-EMPTING MUCH RUMORED ELF/PLF RAINY SEASON OFFENSIVE BY UNBALANCING INSURGENTS AND FORCING THEM TO FOCUS ON SITUATION IN ASMARA WHICH IS A FORMIDABLE TARGET. EPMG INTENTIONS, HOWEVER, NOT DISTINCT AND SOME EPMG ACTIONS SEEM TO RUN COUNTER TO THIS SCENARIO.
SHERRY

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